

Fez, Morocco

Fez (Arabic: فاس, Berber: **Fas**, ⴰⴼⴰⵙ, French: *Fès*) is a city in northern inland Morocco and the capital of the Fas-Meknas administrative region. It is the second or third largest city of Morocco after Casablanca,^[4] with a population of 1.1 million (2014). Located to the northeast of Atlas Mountains, Fez is situated at the crossroad of the important cities of all regions; 206 km (128 mi) from Tangier to the northwest, 246 km (153 mi) from Casablanca, 169 km (105 mi) from Rabat to the west, and 387 km (240 mi) from Marrakesh to the southwest which leads to the Trans-Saharan trade route. It is surrounded by the high grounds, and the old city is penetrated by the River of Fez flowing from the west to east.

Fez was founded under the Idrisid rule during the 8th-9th century. It consisted of two autonomous and competing settlements. The migration of 2000 Arab families in the early 9th century gave the nascent city its Arabic character. After the downfall of the Idrisid dynasty, several empires came and went until the 11th century when the Almoravid Sultan Yusuf ibn Tashfin united the two settlements and rebuilt the city, which became today's Fes el Bali quarter. Under the Almoravid rule, the city gained the reputation for the religious scholarship and the mercantile activity. Fez was expanded during the Almohad rule and became the largest city in the world during 1170-1180 with the estimated population of 200,000.

Fez reached its zenith in the Marinid-era, regaining the status as the capital. Numerous madrasas, mosques, zawiyas and city gates were constructed which survived up until today. These buildings are considered the hallmarks of Moorish and Moroccan architectural styles. Marinid sultans also founded Fes Jdid quarter, where newer palaces and gardens were established. During this time, the Jewish population of the city grew as well, with the Mellah (Jewish quarter) attracting the Jewish migrants from other North African regions. After the overthrow of the Marinid dynasty, the city largely declined and replaced by Marrakesh for political and cultural influence, but remained as the capital under the Wattasids and modern Morocco until 1912.

Today, the city largely consists of two old medina quarters, Fes el Bali and Fes Jdid, and modern urban area of Ville Nouvelle constructed during the French colonial era. The medina of Fez is listed as a World Heritage Site and is believed to be one of the world's largest urban pedestrian zones (car-free areas).^[5] It has the University of Al Quaraouiyine which was founded in 859 and the oldest continuously functioning university in the world. It also has Chouara Tannery from the 11th century, one of the oldest tanneries in the world. The city has been called the "Mecca of the West" and the "Athens of Africa," a nickname it shares with Cyrene in Libya.^[6]

In the book The Travels of Ibn Battuta, Battuta describes the city of Fes. At the beginning of his first journey to Mecca he joined a caravan on its way to Mecca. Also at Tripoli in Libya is where he married for the first time. Ibn Battuta carried on his journey with his wife but later on the trip him and his wife were separated. Battuta later in this journey married another women. A women from Fez. Another voyage to Mecca, between the years 1328 and 1330 Battuta took the southern part of the Arabian peninsula and also parts of east Africa. == Etymology == The Arabic word فأس *Fa's* means pickaxe, which legends say Idris I of Morocco used when he created the lines of the city. One noticeable thing was that the pickaxe was made from silver and gold.^{[7][8]}

Fez, Morocco is a city that is completely surrounded by low hills. The old city contains the oldest mosque in Northern Africa (Qarawiyyin). This mosque is a seat both famous islamic university and Sidi Mohammed Ibn Abdellah University. The new section of the city Fez was founded in the 13th century by the Marinids. This section contains the Royal Palace and the adjoining Great Mosque. Also, just south of the Royal Palace is the jewish quarter. Many jewish goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewelers who once who once lived here immigrated to Israel shortly after the founding of the state after WWII. Tourism is a major industry in Fez. The old city was named UNESCO (World Heritage site) in 1981. Fez also has an international airport. The area where fez is produces cereals, beans, olives, and grapes. Also, sheep, goats, and cattle are also raised here.== History ==

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Fez
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City



Clockwise from top:

View of Fes el Bali, Bou Inania Madrasa, University of Al Quaraouiyine, street view, Zaouia Moulay Idriss II, Chouara Tannery, Bab Bou Jeloud



Location of Fez within Morocco

- Show map of Morocco
- Show map of Africa
- Show all

Coordinates: 34°2′N 5°0′W

Country	 Morocco
Region	Fès-Meknès
Founded	789
Founded by	Idrisid dynasty
Government 	
 • Mayor	Idriss Azami Al Idrissi
 • Governor	Said Zniber
Area 	
 • Urban	320 km ² (120 sq mi)
Elevation ^[1]	410 m (1,350 ft)
Population (2014) ^[2]	
 • City	1,112,072
 • Rank	2nd in Morocco
 • Demonym	Fasi

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Racial makeup	
Arabized Berbers	53.6%
Berbers	32.7%
Moriscos	10.2%
Others	3.5%
Time zone	GMT (UTC±0)
Area code(s)	+212 (55)
Website	www.fes-city.com (http://www.fes-city.com/)
UNESCO World Heritage Site	
Official name	Medina of Fes
Type	Cultural
Criteria	iii, iv
Designated	1981
Reference no.	[3]
State Party	Morocco
Region	Arab States

Foundation and the Idrisids

The city was founded on a bank of the Jawhar river by [Idris I](#) in 789, founder of the [Idrisid dynasty](#). His son, [Idris II](#) (808),^[9] built a settlement on the opposing river bank. These settlements would soon develop into two walled and largely autonomous sites, often in conflict with one another: *Madinat Fas* and *Al-'Aliya*. In 808 Al-'Aliya replaced [Walili](#) as the capital of the Idrisids.

Arab emigration to Fez, including 800 Andalusí families of Berber descent^[10] in 817–818 expelled after a rebellion against the Umayyads of Córdoba, Andalusia, and 2000 Arab families banned from Kairouan (modern Tunisia) after another rebellion in 824, gave the city its Arabic character. The Andalusians settled in what is called the 'Old' Fez, while the Tunisians found their home in the 'New' Fez, also called al-'Aliya. These two waves of immigrants would subsequently give their name to the sites 'Adwat Al-Andalus and 'Adwat al-Qarawiyyin.^[11] The majority of the population was of Arab descent, and the minority was of North-African Berber descent, with rural Berbers from the surrounding countryside settling there throughout this early period, mainly in Madinat Fas (the Andalusian quarter) and later in [Fes Jdid](#).^[12]

Upon the death of Idris II in 828, the dynasty's territory was divided among his sons. The eldest, Muhammad, received Fez. The newly fragmented Idrisid power would never again be reunified. During [Yahya ibn Muhammad](#)'s rule in Fez the Kairouyine [mosque](#), one of the oldest and largest in Africa, was built and its associated [University of Al Quaraouiyyine](#) was founded (859).^[13] Comparatively little is known about Idrisid Fez, owing to the lack of comprehensive historical narratives and that little has survived of the architecture and infrastructure of early Fez (Al-'Aliya). The sources that mention Idrisid Fez, describe a rather rural one, not having the cultural sophistication of the important cities of [Al-Andalus](#) and [Ifriqiya](#).

In the 10th century the city was contested by the [Caliphate of Córdoba](#) and the [Fatimid Caliphate](#) of Tunisia, who ruled the city through a host of [Zenata](#) clients. The Fatimids took the city in 927 and expelled the Idrissids, after which their [Miknasa](#) were installed there. The Miknasa were driven out of Fez in 980 by the [Maghrawa](#), their fellow Zenata, allies of the Caliphate of Córdoba. It was in this period that the great Andalusian ruler [Almanzor](#) commissioned the Maghrawa to rebuild and refurnish the Al-Kairouan mosque, giving it much of its current appearance. According to the [Rawd al-Qirtas](#) and other Marinid era sources, the Maghrawi emir Dunas Al-Maghrawi filled up the open spaces between the two medinas and the banks of the river, dividing them with new constructions. Thus, the two cities grew into each other, being now only separated by their walls and the river. His sons fortified the city to a great extent. This could not keep the Almoravid emir Ibn Tashfin from conquering it in 1070, after more than a decade of battling the Zenata warriors in the area and constant besieging of the city.

In 1033, several thousand Jews were killed in [the Fez Massacre](#).

Golden age and the Marinid period



View of the old medina, with the minaret of Zaouia Moulay Idriss II on the left, where it commemorates Idris II, the founder of Fez.

Madinat Fas and Al-'Aliya were united in 1070 by the Almoravid dynasty: The walls dividing them were destroyed, bridges connecting them were built, and connecting walls were constructed that unified the medinas. Under Almoravid patronage the largest expansion and renovation of the Great Mosque of Kairouan took place (1134-1143). Although the capital was moved to Marrakesh under the Almoravids, Fez acquired a reputation for Maliki legal scholarship and became an important centre of trade. Almoravid impact on the city's structure was such that the second Almoravid ruler, Yusuf ibn Tashfin, is often considered to be the second founder of Fez.^[14]

Like many Moroccan cities, Fez was greatly enlarged during the Almohad Caliphate and saw its previously dominating rural aspect lessen. This was accomplished partly by the settling there of Andalusians and the further improvement of the infrastructure. At the start of the 13th century they broke down the Idrisid city walls and constructed new ones, which covered a much wider space. These Almohad walls exist to this day as the outline of Fes el Bali. Under Almohad rule the city grew to become one of the largest in the world between 1170 and 1180, with an estimated 200.000 people living there.^[15]

In 1250 Fez regained its capital status under the Marinid dynasty. In 1276 after a massacre by the population to kill all Jews that was stopped by intervention of the Emir,^[16] they founded Fes Jdid, which they made their administrative and military centre. Fez reached its golden age in the Marinid period, which marked the beginning of its official, historical narrative.^{[17][18]} It is from the Marinid period that Fez's reputation as an important intellectual centre largely dates.^[19] They established the first madrasas in the city and country.^{[20][21]} The principal monuments in the medina, the residences and public buildings, date from the Marinid period.^[22] The madrasas are a hallmark of Marinid architecture, with its striking blending of Andalusian and Almohad traditions. Between 1271 and 1357 seven madrasas were built in Fez, the style of which has come to be typical of Fassi architecture.

The Jewish quarter of Fez, the Mellah was built in 1438, near the royal residence in Fez Jdid. The Mellah at first consisted of Jews from Fez el Bali and soon saw the arrival of Berber Jews from the Atlas range and Jewish immigrants from al-Andalus. The Marinids spread the cult of Idris I and encouraged sharifism, financing sharifian families as a way to legitimize their (in essence secular) rule: From the 14th century onwards hundreds of families throughout Morocco claimed descent from Idris I, especially in Fez and the Rif mountains. In this regard they can be seen as the enablers of the latter sharifian dynasties of Morocco. The 1465 Moroccan revolt in 1465 overthrew the last Marinid sultan. In 1474 the Marinids were replaced by their relatives of the Wattasid dynasty, who faithfully (but for a large part unsuccessfully) continued Marinid policies.^[23]



Jews of Fez in 1900s. Mellah was a traditional Jewish quarter of the city.

Modern period

After the fall of the Marinids, the city remained the capital of Morocco under the Wattasids. However, in the 16th century, the Saadis, based in Marrakech, would attempt to overthrow the Wattasids. In the meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire came close to Fez after the conquest of Oujda in the 16th century. In January 1549 the Saadi sultan Mohammed ash-Sheikh took Fez and ousted the last Wattasid sultan Ali Abu Hassun. They later retook the city in 1553 with Ottoman support. However, this reconquest was short-lived, and in 1554 the Wattasids were decisively defeated in the battle of Tadla by the Saadis. The Ottomans would try to invade Morocco after the assassination of Mohammed ash-Sheikh in 1558, but were defeated by his son Abdallah al-Ghalib at the battle of Wadi al-Laban north of Fez. Hence, Morocco remained the only North-African state to deter and defeat the Ottomans.^[24]

After the death of Abdallah al-Ghalib a new power struggle would emerge, after Abd al-Malik would take Fez with Ottoman support and oust his nephew Abu Abdullah. The latter would flee to Portugal where he asked king Sebastian of Portugal for help to regain his throne. This would lead to the Battle of Alcacer Quibir where Abd al-Malik's army would defeat the invading Portuguese army with the support of his Ottoman allies, ensuring Moroccan independence. Abd al-Malik himself also died during the battle and would be succeeded by Ahmad al-Mansur.

After the fall of the Saadi dynasty (1649), Fez was a major trading post of the Barbary Coast of North Africa. Until the 19th century it was the only source of fezzes (also known as the *tarboosh*). Then manufacturing began in France and Turkey as well. Originally, the dye for the hats came from a berry that was grown outside the city, known as the Turkish *kızılca* or Greek *akenia* (*Cornus mas*). Fez was also the end of a north-south gold trading route from Timbuktu. Fez was a prime manufacturing location for embroidery and leather goods such as the Adarga.

The city became independent in 1790, under the leadership of Yazid (1790–1792) and later of Abu 'r-Rabi Sulayman. In 1795 control of the city returned to Morocco. Fez took part in a rebellion in 1819-1821, led by Ibrahim ibn Yazid, as well as in the 1832 rebellion led by Muhammad ibn Tayyib.

Following the implementation of the Treaty of Fez, the city was heavily damaged in the 1912 Fez riots and belonged to French Morocco until 1956.^[25]

Fez was the capital of Morocco until 1925. Rabat then remained the capital even after Morocco achieved independence in 1955.

Despite its traditional character, there is a modern section: the Ville Nouvelle or "New City". Today it is a bustling commercial center. The popularity of the Fez has increased since present ruler, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, married a woman from Fez, Salma Bennani.

Place Lalla Yeddoune at the heart of the Medina is currently undergoing reconstruction and preservation measures following a design competition sponsored by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (Washington D.C.)^[26] and the Government of the Morocco. The construction projects scheduled for completion in 2016 encompass historic preservation of particular buildings, construction of new buildings that fit into the existing urban fabric and regeneration of the riverfront. The intention is to not only preserve the quality and characteristics of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, but to encourage the development of the area as a sustainable, mixed-use area for artisanal industries and local residents.

Climate



The abdication of Abd al-Hafid, Sultan of Morocco in 1912

Located by the Atlas Mountains, Fez has a [Mediterranean climate](#) with a strong continental influence, shifting from relatively cool and wet in the winter to dry and hot days in the summer months between June and September. Rainfall can reach up to 800 mm (31 in) on good years. The winter highs typically reach around 15 °C (59 °F) in December–January. Frost is not uncommon during the winter period. The highest and lowest temperatures ever recorded in the city are 46.7 °C (116 °F) and −8.2 °C (17 °F), respectively.^(*see weather-table below*). Fez's climate is strongly similar to that of [Seville](#) and [Córdoba](#), [Andalusia](#), Spain. Snowfall on average occurs once every 3 to 5 years. Fez recorded snowfall in three straight years in 2005, 2006 and 2007.^{[27][28][29][30]}

Climate data for Fez													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C (°F)	25.0 (77)	30.5 (86.9)	33.3 (91.9)	37.0 (98.6)	40.8 (105.4)	44.0 (111.2)	46.7 (116.1)	44.4 (111.9)	41.7 (107.1)	37.5 (99.5)	31.2 (88.2)	27.0 (80.6)	46.7 (116.1)
Average high °C (°F)	14.7 (58.5)	16.2 (61.2)	18.5 (65.3)	21.7 (71.1)	25.6 (78.1)	31.3 (88.3)	35.8 (96.4)	35.6 (96.1)	30.7 (87.3)	25.2 (77.4)	18.7 (65.7)	15.3 (59.5)	24.1 (75.4)
Daily mean °C (°F)	9.4 (48.9)	10.8 (51.4)	12.4 (54.3)	15.3 (59.5)	18.7 (65.7)	23.0 (73.4)	27.1 (80.8)	27.1 (80.8)	23.4 (74.1)	18.7 (65.7)	13.2 (55.8)	10.1 (50.2)	17.4 (63.3)
Average low °C (°F)	4.1 (39.4)	5.4 (41.7)	6.3 (43.3)	8.9 (48)	11.8 (53.2)	14.7 (58.5)	18.4 (65.1)	18.6 (65.5)	16.1 (61)	12.2 (54)	7.7 (45.9)	4.9 (40.8)	10.8 (51.4)
Record low °C (°F)	−8.2 (17.2)	−4.9 (23.2)	−2.5 (27.5)	−0.5 (31.1)	0.0 (32)	4.9 (40.8)	8.5 (47.3)	9.2 (48.6)	5.9 (42.6)	0.0 (32)	−1.4 (29.5)	−5.0 (23)	−8.2 (17.2)
Average rainfall mm (inches)	84.6 (3.331)	81.1 (3.193)	71.3 (2.807)	46.0 (1.811)	24.1 (0.949)	6.4 (0.252)	1.2 (0.047)	1.9 (0.075)	17.7 (0.697)	41.5 (1.634)	90.5 (3.563)	82.2 (3.236)	548.5 (21.595)
Average rainy days	9	10	9	10	7	3	1	1	3	7	9	9	78
Average snowy days	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Mean daily sunshine hours	6	6	7	8	9	10	11	10	9	7	6	6	7.9
Percent possible sunshine	60	55	58	62	64	71	79	77	75	64	60	60	65.4
Source #1: Hong Kong Observatory ^[31]													
Source #2: Meowweather.com, ^[30] Voodoo skies for extremes ^[29] Weather Atlas ^[32]													

Climate data for Fez														
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year	
Mean daily daylight hours	10.0	11.0	12.0	13.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	13.0	12.0	11.0	10.0	10.0	12.0	
Average Ultraviolet index	3	4	6	8	9	10	11	10	8	6	4	3	6.8	
Source: Weather Atlas ^[32]														

Subdivisions

The prefecture is divided administratively into the following:^[33]

Name	Geographic code	Type	House-holds	Population (2004)	Foreign population	Moroccan population	Notes
Agdal	231.01.01.	Arrondissement	32740	144064	747	143317	
Mechouar Fes Jdid	231.01.03.	Municipality	6097	26078	83	25995	
Saïss	231.01.05.	Arrondissement	32990	156590	561	156029	
Fes-Medina	231.01.07.	Arrondissement	20088	91473	110	91363	
Jnan El Ouard	231.01.09.	Arrondissement	32618	174226	15	174211	
El Mariniyine	231.01.11.	Arrondissement	37958	163291	40	163251	
Oulad Tayeb	231.81.01.	Rural commune	3233	19144	3	19141	5056 residents live in the center, called Ouled Tayeb; 14088 residents live in rural areas.
Ain Bida	231.81.03.	Rural commune	1146	6854	0	6854	
Sidi Harazem	231.81.05.	Rural commune	982	5133	0	5133	3317 residents live in the center, called Skhinate; 1816 residents live in rural areas.

Landmarks

Medina of Fez

The historic city of Fez consists of Fes el-Bali, the original city founded by the Idrisid dynasty on both shores of the Oued Fes (River of Fez) in the late 8th and early 9th centuries, and the smaller Fez el-Jdid, founded on higher ground to the west in the 13th century. It is distinct from Fez's now much larger Ville Nouvelle (new city) originally founded by the French. Fes el-Bali is the site of the famous Qarawiyyin University and the Mausoleum of Moulay Idris II, the most important religious and cultural sites, while Fez el-Jdid is the site of the enormous Royal Palace, still used by the King of Morocco today. These two historic cities are linked together and are usually referred to together as the medina of Fez, though this term is sometimes applied more restrictively to Fes el-Bali only.^[a] Fez is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination and many non-Moroccans are now restoring traditional houses (riads and dars) as second homes in the medina. Fez is also considered the cultural and spiritual capital of Morocco.^[34] In 1981, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed *Medina of Fez* a World Cultural Heritage site, as "[they] include a considerable number of religious, civil and military monuments that brought about a multi-cultural society. This architecture is characterised by construction techniques and decoration developed over a period of more than ten centuries, and where local knowledge and skills are interwoven with diverse outside inspiration (Andalousian, Oriental and African). The Medina of Fez is considered as one of the most extensive and best conserved historic towns of the Arab-Muslim world."^[35]



The interior of Zaouia Moulay Idriss II, where commemorates Idris II, the founder of Fez.

Madrasas



The interior view of Al-Attarine Madrasa built by the Marinid sultan Abu al-Hassan in 1323-1325.

The city has traditionally retained the influential position as a religious capital in the region, exemplified by the Madrasa of Al Quaraouiyyine which was established in 859 by Fatima al-Fihri originally as a mosque. The madrasa is the oldest existing, continually operating and the first degree awarding educational institution in the world according to UNESCO and Guinness World Records.^{[36][37]} During the Marinid rule, Fez was designated as the political and religious capital of the empire, partly due to the Sultan Abu Yaqub Yusuf's intention to mitigate the tension between the ulamas in the old city. This had led to the great attention by the government to the construction of the madrasas following the Maliki orthodoxy, which resulted in the unprecedented prosperity of the city's religious institutions. The first madrasa built during the Marinid era was Saffarin Madrasa in Fes el Bali by Abu Yaqub Yusuf. Sultan Abu al-Hassan was the most prolific patron of the madrasa construction, completing the Al-Attarine, Mesbahiyya and Sahrij Madrasa in Fez alone, and several other madrasas as well in other cities such as Salé and Meknes. His son Abu Inan Faris built the famed Bou Inania Madrasa, and by the time of his death, every major city in the Marinid Empire had at least

one madrasa.^[38] The additional library was established as well for the Madrasa of Al Quaraouiyyine in 1349, which stores a large selection of valuable manuscripts dating back to the medieval era.^[39] The largest madrasa in the medina is Shiratin Madrasa commissioned by the Alaouite sultan Al-Rashid in 1670, which is the only non-Marinid foundation besides the Madrasa of Al Quaraouiyyine.^[40]

Fortifications

City walls and gates

The entire medina of Fez was heavily fortified with crenelated walls which equip heavy watchtowers and gates, a pattern of urban planning which can be seen in Salé and Chellah as well.^[38] City walls were placed into the current positions during the 11th century, under the Almoravid rule. During this period, the two divided cities of Fez were united under the single enclosure. The structures of Almoravid era were later destroyed and subsequently rebuilt by the Almohad dynasty in the 12th century. These fortifications were completed and formed into the current shape under the Marinid rule during the 12th to 16th centuries, along with the founding of Fes Jdid.^[41] The gates of Fez are adjacent to these city walls, and guarded by the military detachments and shut at night.^[38] During its development in the 9th century, Fes el Bali was enclosed by the eight main gates. After the foundation of Fes Jdid by the Marinids in the 13th century on the outside of these gates, new walls and three new gates such as Bab al-Amer were established as perimeters between these two medinas.^{[42][43]} The construction of the new gates employed the Christian labor.^[38] Additional gates were constructed during the Alaouite era, most notably Bab Bou Jeloud in 1913.^[44] Other remaining gates of Fez today include Bab el-Seba, Bab Semmarine, Bab al-Fetouh, Bab Mahrouk and Bab Chorfa.



City walls of Fez. The bastion on the right is Kasbah Cherarda.

Forts and Kasbahs



Bab Chorfa, the entrance gate to Kasbah An-Nouar. Open-air markets are held in front of the gate.

Along with the city walls and gates, several forts were constructed as defensive perimeters of the medina during the different time periods. The military watchtowers built in its early days during the Idrisid era were relatively small. However, the city rapidly developed as the military garrison center of the region during the Almoravid era, in which the military operations were commanded and carried out to other North African regions and Southern Europe to the north, and Senegal river to the south. Subsequently, it led to the construction of numerous forts, kasbahs, and towers against the foreign invasions. Kasbah in the context of Maghrebi region is the traditional military structure for fortification, military preparation, and command and control. Some of them were occupied as well by the citizens, certain tribal groups, and merchants. Throughout the history, 13 kasbahs were constructed surrounding the old city.^[45] The most prominent among them is Kasbah An-Nouar, which dates back to the Almohad era, located at the western or north-western tip of Fes el-Bali. Today, the kasbah is a residential district much like the rest of the medina. The kasbah is equipped with the Friday Mosque and Bab Chorfa entrance gate.^[46] Other kasbahs including Kasbah

Cherarda located on the outskirts of Fes el Bali. It was first established during the Saadi era in the 16th century and later refurbished by the Alaouite Sultan Mulai al-Rashid as a fortress.^[45] Kasbah Dar Debibagh is a relatively new kasbah built in 1729 during the Alaouite era at 2km from the city wall in a strategic position.^{[45][47]} To the north, there is Borj Nord which dates back to the Saadi era and among the largest defensive structures in the city, now refurbished as a military museum.^[48]

Tanneries

Since the inception of the city, tanning industry has been continually operating in the same fashion as it did in the early centuries. Today, the tanning industry in the city is considered one of the main tourist attractions. There are three tanneries in the city, largest among them is Chouara Tannery near the Saffarin Madrasa along the river, built in the 11th century. The tanneries are packed with the round stone wells filled with dye or white liquids for softening the hides. The leather goods produced in the tanneries are exported around the world.^{[49][50][51]}



Leather tanning in Chouara Tannery.

Tombs and mausoleums

Located in the heart of Fes el Bali, the Zaouia of Moulay Idriss II is a *zaouia* (a shrine and religious complex; also spelled *zawiya*), dedicated to and contains the tomb of Idris II (or Moulay Idris II when including his sharifian title) who is considered the main founder of the city of Fez.^{[52][53]} Within the medina quarter, there exists as well the Zaouia of Sidi Ahmed al-Tijani, which commemorates Sidi Ahmed al-Tijani, the founder of Tijaniyyah tariqa from the 18th century.^[54] To the north, there are Marinid Tombs built during the 14th century as a necropolis for the Marinid sultans.^[55]

Places of worship

There are numerous old mosques in the medina, some of which are adjacent to the respective madrasa, zaouia or kasbah. Among the oldest are the Mosque of Al-Qarawiyyin, the mosque adjacent to its university, which dates back to 857,^[56] the Andalusian Mosque which dates back to 859-860 with the minaret erected in 956,^[57] Masjid Ali Boughaleb from 1090,^[58] Bou Jeloud Mosque from 1191-1214,^[59] and the Mosque of the Kasbah en-Nouar (or Kasbah Filala) from around 1200.^[60] A number of mosques from the important Marinid era, when Fes el-Jdid was created to be the capital of Morocco, and include the Great Mosque of Fes Jdid from 1279,^[61] the Abu al-Hassan Mosque from 1341,^[62] the Chrabliyyine Mosque from 1342,^[59] the al-Hamra Mosque from 1350,^[63] and the Bab Guissa Mosque from the reign of Abu al-Hassan (1331-1351) (but modified in later centuries).^[64] Another major but more recent mosque is the R'cif Mosque built in the reign of Moulay Slimane (1793-1822).^[65] The Zaouia of Moulay Idriss II and the Zaouia of Sidi Ahmed al-Tijani have their adjacent mosques as well. The Jewish quarter (Mellah) is the site of the 17th-century Ibn Danan Synagogue.

Residences

The old city of Fez includes more than a hundred funduqs (traditional inns) for visiting merchants and travelers alike. Among the prominent funduqs are Funduq al-Najjariyyin, which was built in the 18th century by the Alaouite Sultan Amin Adiyil, in order to provide the stay and the storage facility for merchants.^[66] Older funduqs include Funduq Achich from the 16th century.^[67] There are other numerous funduqs and riads utilized as hotels for the tourism industry. Some of the historical private residences have been turned into tourist attractions, among them is Alami House of the 17th-18th century which features prevalent Moroccan architectural style.^[68] As a former administrative seat, the city contains several palaces as well. Dar Batha is a former palace completed in 1897 by the Alawouite Sultan Moulai Abdelaziz, and turned into a museum in 1915 with around 6,000 collections.^[69] On Fes Jdid quarter, there is the 80 hectar wide Royal Palace, or Dar al-Makhzen, with imposing gate but not open to the public.



Gates of the Alaouite Royal Palace (Dar al-Makhzen).



Panoramic view of the Old Medina

Education

Universities

The University of Al Quaraouiyine is the oldest continually-operating university in the world.^[70] The al-Karaouine mosque was founded by Fatima al-Fihri in 859 with an associated school, or madrassa, which subsequently became one of the leading spiritual and educational centers of the historic Muslim world.^[71] It became a state university in 1963, and remains an important institution of learning today.^[72]

Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University is a public university that was founded in 1975 and has two primary campuses in the city (Dhar El Mehraz and Sais).



University of Al Quaraouiyine.

Primary and secondary schools

The city has a French international school, Groupe scolaire Jean-de-La-Fontaine, serving *moyenne section* through *collège* (junior high school).^[73]

Transport

The city is served by Saïss Airport. It also has an ONCF train station with lines east to Oujda and west to Tangier and Casablanca.^[74]

Sport

Fez has two football teams, MAS Fez (Fés Maghrebi) and Wydad de Fès (WAF). They both play in the Botola the highest tier of the Moroccan football system and play their home matches at the 45,000 seat Complexe Sportif de Fès stadium.

The MAS Fez basketball team competes in the Nationale 1, Morocco's top basketball division.



Gare de Fes, train station in the modern urban area of Fez.

International relations

Twin towns — sister cities

Fez is twinned with:

- Antwerp, Belgium, since 2000
- Montpellier, France, since 1961
- Strasbourg, France, since 1961
- Florence, Italy, since 1961
- Kairouan, Tunisia, since 1965
- Tlemcen, Algeria, since 1969
- Saint Louis, Senegal, since 1979
- Córdoba, Andalusia, Spain, since 1982
- East Jerusalem, Palestinian territories since 1982
- İzmir, Turkey, since 1995^[75]
- Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, since 2003
- Suwon, South Korea, since 2003
- Coimbra, Portugal^[76]
- Lahore, Pakistan
- Multan, Pakistan
- Puebla City, Mexico

Partnerships

- Kraków in Poland *(since 1985)*^[77]

See also

- Treaty of Fez
- Bibliography of the history of Fez

Notes

a. *Medina* is the Arabic word for "city", which in former French colonies in North Africa is also used to refer to the old part of a city, as the French largely generally built new cities (*Ville Nouvelles*) next to them and left the historic cities intact.

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External links

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▪ Portal dedicated to Fez. Online Since 2006. (<http://www.ville2fes.com/>)

▪ Fez Portal at Ville Fès (<http://www.villefes.com/>)

▪ Complexe culturel de Fès (<http://www.fes-culture.ma/>), Cultural Complex of Fez

▪ The portal of Fez at Fès-City (<http://www.fes-city.com/>)

▪ Competition for the architectural and urban preservation and renovation of the Medina (http://www.projectcompetition-fez.com/projects_projectcompetition-fez_home_e.htm)

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Preceded by Aleppo	Capital of Islamic Culture 2007	Succeeded by Alexandria, Djibouti, Lahore
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